



Costa Rican Spanish

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Costa Rican Spanish

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make the most of this phrasebook ...

Anyone can speak another language! It's all about confidence. Don't worry if you can't remember your school language lessons or if you've never learnt a language before. Even if you learn the very basics (on the inside covers of this book), your travel experience will be the better for it. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain when the locals hear you making an effort.



finding things in this book

For easy navigation, this book is in sections. The Basics chapters are the ones you'll thumb through time and again. The Practical section covers basic travel situations like catching transport and finding a bed. The Social section gives you conversational phrases, pick-up lines, the ability to express opinions – so you can get to know people. Food has a section all of its own: gourmets and vegetarians are covered and local dishes feature. Safe Travel equips you with health and police phrases, just in case. Remember the colours of each section and you'll find everything easily; or use the comprehensive Index. Otherwise, check the two-way traveller's Dictionary for the word you need.

being understood

Throughout this book you'll see coloured phrases on each page. They're phonetic guides to help you pronounce the language. You don't even need to look at the language itself, but you'll get used to the way we've represented particular sounds. The pronunciation chapter in Basics will explain more, but you can feel confident that if you read the coloured phrase slowly, you'll be understood.

communication tips

Body language, ways of doing things, sense of humour – all have a role to play in every culture. 'Local talk' boxes show you common ways of saying things, or everyday language to drop into conversation. 'Listen for ...' boxes supply the phrases you may hear. They start with the language (so local people can point out what they want to say to you) and then lead in to the pronunciation guide and the English translation.

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costa rican spanish



official language

For more details, see the **introduction**.

Costa Rican Spanish lounges under the beach umbrella of Latin American Spanish – the term given to the many varieties of Spanish that have evolved in the Americas after the Spanish conquests in the 16th century. The language that originally emerged as one of the branches of vulgar Latin successfully took root and spread in the New World and now has official status in 20 countries of Latin America.

Not only did the Spanish language successfully transplant itself, it also hybridised with the indigenous languages and became a colourful array of different varieties of Spanish. Among them, Costa Rican stands out as a unique linguistic entity with its own intriguing quirks of both grammar and vocabulary.

The main grammatical peculiarity is voseo **vo-se-o** – the use of *vos* (meaning ‘you’) as the second-person singular pronoun, which is considered an archaism in Spain. This is a feature that Costa Rican shares with varieties of Spanish found in other Latin American countries, particularly Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay,

Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. In vocabulary, the abundance of diminutives formed by adding **-tico** **·tee-ko** and **-tica** **·tee-ka** to the ends of masculine and feminine words respectively – a cutesy way of saying ‘small’ or expressing affection – has earned Costa Ricans the nickname *Ticos*.

Perhaps what gives Costa Rican Spanish its most distinctive flavour is the rich store of slang expressions commonly known as *tiquismos* **tee-kees-mos**.

at a glance ...

language name:

Costa Rican Spanish

name in language:

español (*costarricense*)

es·pa·nyol

(*kos·ta·ree·sen·se*),

castellano **kas·te·ya·no**

language family: Romance

approximate number of speakers: over 3 million

close relatives:

Castilian Spanish,
Latin American Spanish,
Italian, French,
Portuguese

This phrasebook contains many of these unique turns of phrase to get you talking like a Tico or a Tica and blending in with the crowd. Take it with you and you'll learn exactly why the expression *pura vida* *poo-ra vee-da* embodies the friendly, unhurried approach to life in Costa Rica. You'll also learn a lot about other key elements of Costa Rican culture expressed in the language.

Though it's a distinct variety of Spanish, Costa Rican does share many similarities with its Latin American siblings which set it apart from the mother language, Castilian Spanish. Costa Rican was influenced by the southern Spanish dialect of Andalusia, from where the first Spanish conquistadors sailed to the New World. The most noticeable trait that sets Costa Rican pronunciation apart from Castilian Spanish is common for the entire continent – seseo *se-se-o*, or the absence of the lisping consonants *c* and *z*, as in *cerveza* *ser-ve-sa* (beer).

By learning some Costa Rican Spanish, you're opening the door to a world of over 350 million speakers – and be reassured, while it's a distinct variety with its own beautiful individualities, Costa Rican Spanish will be understood by speakers all over Latin America – and even in Spain.

This book gives you the practical phrases you need to get by, as well as the fun, social phrases that lead to a better understanding of Costa Rica and its people. It will also ensure that you can pronounce them like a true *Tico* or *Tica*. To help you get the most out of your travels in beautiful Costa Rica with its many natural wonders, this phrasebook also provides you with an ecotourism section listing the names of flora, fauna and natural features in both Spanish and English.

The contacts you make through speaking Costa Rican Spanish will make your travel experience unique. Local knowledge, new relationships and a sense of satisfaction are on the tip of your tongue – so don't just stand there, say something!

abbreviations used in this book

a	adjective	n	noun
adv	adverb	pl	plural
f	feminine	pol	polite
inf	informal	sg	singular
m	masculine	v	verb